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ART IN REVIEW

Karin Sander

*D'Amelio Terras Gallery
525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through May 13*

It's unusual to see sculpture that might simultaneously put artists as different as Stephen Balkenhol and Tom Friedman out of business. But both Mr. Balkenhol's rough-hewn wood figures and Mr. Friedman's obsessive, seemingly impossible feats of skill may seem a tad obsolete when you first encounter Karin Sander's new work.

This young German artist is known for subtle architectural interventions; in her 1994 Projects show at the Museum of Modern Art, she polished painting-sized squares of wall throughout the building to a porcelainlike high gloss. Her fourth solo show in New York marks a departure of means but not effect.

It contains 36 miniature figurative sculptures of people in contemporary dress, none more than four inches high. On first encounter they seem to be casually and confidently hand carved (like Mr. Balkenhol's work), albeit out of a space-age plastic. They also appear to be breathtakingly realistic, the creation of some obsessive perfectionist (like Mr. Friedman). But in short order one starts to suspect that the delicate roughness of their surfaces is not man-made.

A veracity that is both soulful and physical insinuates itself. These figures feel disturbingly, intimately true: varied in physical posture, emotional presence and facial expression, precise in the detailing and easy hang of their different garments, and familiar in the clear identifiability of things like shoes. (One tall, slim man seems to be wearing the latest Prada loafers, color-coordinated with a light-blue suit.) In addition the forms and surfaces are defined by exquisite, consistent horizontal ridges, as if carved with a needle.

In fact the Lilliputian figures are three-dimensional computer-made portraits that resulted when Ms. Sander combined two new technologies available at two companies in Germany that had never worked to-

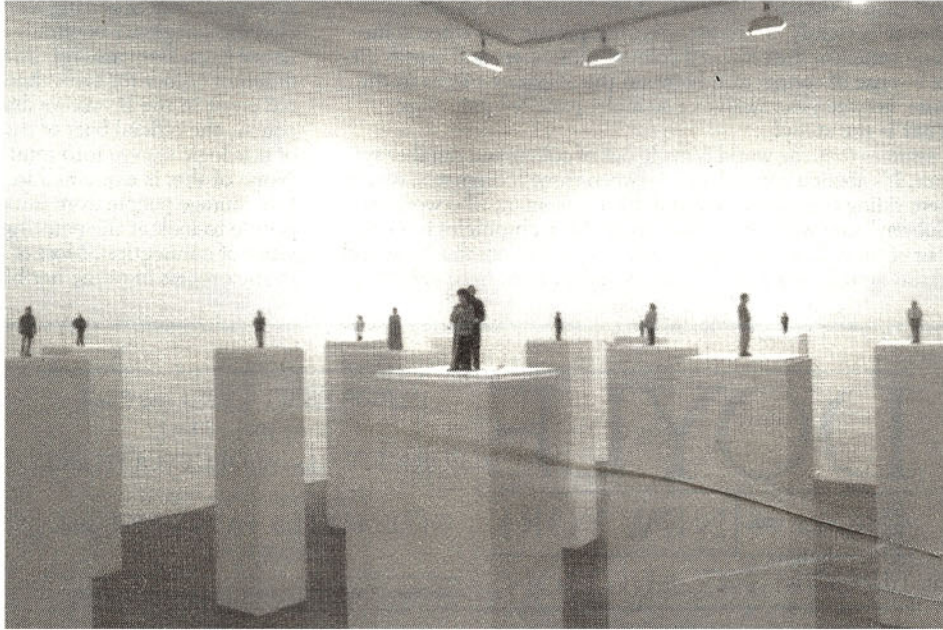
gether. The starting point was a full-length, three-dimensional laser scan of a person made with 16 digital cameras manufactured by Tecmath, a company that works mostly with the fashion industry. These measurements were then taken to Glatz, an engineering company that makes prototypes, small models and parts. There they were fed into a machine that, through a process called fused deposition modeling, built a three-dimensional figure by spraying paper-thin cross-sections of ABS plastic according to the body contours of the subject (hence, the delicate ridges) at a 1:10 scale. The resulting figure was then painted with an airbrush by a technician.

Ms. Sander's subjects include herself, the technicians she worked with, and prominent citizens of Kaiserslautern and Olpe, where the companies are situated, as well as friends and art world professionals. (The man in light blue is Olivier Renaud-Clement, a New York photography dealer.) Apart from their concentrated emotional impact and disconcerting eye-of-Gulliver perspective, they offer tantalizing glimpses of the future, and not just for art. We can expect a marked improvement at places like Madame Toussaud's, and we also have the possibility of seeing something we almost never see and may not want to: ourselves in the round. **ROBERTA SMITH**



A partial installation view of "1:10," a new sculpture project by the German artist Karin Sander, at the D'Amelio Terras Gallery in Chelsea.

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Spooky little figures by Karin Sander at D'Amelio Terras

□ An artist's swings in and out of style are always intriguing for what they reveal of everything from Zeitgeist to the market to personal obsession, for few things can be harder for a successful practising artist than abandoning their "trademark" work for something altogether more ambitious. Karin Sander, a young German "Konzeptualist" was already well established with her discrete polished sections of public wall, the most elegantly minimal of minimal interventions, subtly altering

windows, floor or wallpaper in a manner that was often only just perceptible.

Indeed, one of the pleasures of her piece on permanent display at MoMA was watching visitors read the label title and then hunt for the work in question, a smooth, shiny square of standard museum wall.

Now with her first one-person show at **D'Amelio Terras**, Sander signals a major stylistic tack, presenting thirty-six tiny figurative sculptures. These are people, measured by a laser scanner and then reproduced in 1:10

scale in plastic before being realistically airbrushed by another technician.

Like the photographic archive of German physical types by her namesake August Sander and crossed with a Kraftwerk aesthetic of impersonal automation, these spooky little figurines are chillingly convincing. After Charles Ray's shrunken self-portrait in a bottle and the wooden sculptures of Balkenhol, Sander has created some of the most effective wee folk in all the contemporary art glen.